

WINTER CONDITIONS IN NORTHERN OHIO, WINTER
OF 1913-14.

BY LYNDS JONES.

Everybody in the middle sections of the United States will remember the early November storm which resulted in blocking traffic and the destruction of miles of telegraph and telephone lines. Any storm or considerable cold so early is unusual and might therefore be expected to have its effect upon the birds of the region affected.

In the vicinity of Oberlin this storm marked the advent of winter conditions as far as the smaller birds were concerned. A good idea of the conditions which followed this storm will be gained from the following extracts from a letter written by Mr. Harry G. Morse, who resides at Huron, Ohio, at the mouth of the river by that name, and within three miles of the marshes which extend eastward from Sandusky. He writes: "It has been rather quiet so far. I don't think the mild winter has had much influence except in the case of the ducks and gulls. I have found both Black Ducks and Mallards since the first of the year, and Bonaparte's Gulls were here until January 11. Saw several flocks of ducks flying south today (February 8).

"Song Sparrows and Flickers have been very scarce since the first of January. I have a record of a Killdeer on February 1, on the beach about a mile west of town. Of the more uncommon winter visitors I have seen very little. Found Snowflakes a few times last fall on the sand spit, and a pair of Lapland Longspurs near the lake December 28.

"Robins, Bluebirds and Rusty Blackbirds, which were found all last winter, do not seem to have stayed this year. Red-headed Woodpeckers are, however, fairly common, as I have recorded about a dozen different birds within a radius of three miles from town."

My own experience is that of the usually common winter birds. The Song Sparrow was entirely absent from most of its usual winter haunts, while scattering Red-headed Wood-

peckers were to be found. Pine Siskins, Redpolls, Snowflakes, Lapland Longspurs, Prairie Horned Larks, Horned Larks, Meadowlarks, Mourning Doves, Northern Flickers, Robins, Bluebirds, and Bronzed Grackles were in about the usual number in and around Oberlin. Reliable reports of Evening Grosbeaks and Snowy Owls were received.

The regular resident birds seemed to be in their usual numbers, but Chickadees, Downy Woodpeckers, and Blue Jays were more concentrated in town and were hard to find in the country. No Carolina Wrens have been recorded since October, but Cardinals are rather more numerous than in former winters.

The natural conclusion, judged from the past winter, is that an early storm of snow accompanied with cold, drives the smaller migratory birds south, but does not seem to affect much the larger birds which are inclined to tarry until the lakes and streams are ice-bound. Thus the Canvasback ducks remained in Sandusky harbor all winter until the severest cold of the winter in late February closed the water completely. It is also interesting to note that the Herring Gulls, which were fed at the wharves of Sandusky during that long cold winter when they must have starved otherwise, congregated there again this winter just as soon as the ice closed the lake, although two winters of open water had intervened.

It is apparent that we know as little about the winter movements and general habits of birds as of any phase of Ornithology. The problem seems to be capable of solution just as soon as we can organize the winter study in a way which will make it possible for students in one section of North America to learn from those studying in other sections what the conditions are which are known to affect the birds and the known food materials. This ought to be possible every winter, but since it appears not to be, ought not the members of the Wilson Club who live in the Mississippi Valley and north to organize for such a campaign of study during the coming winter? It is certainly worth considering with care.